

The Liberal Democrat Group will like to submit a written representation on Item 4 of Wednesday's agenda:

#### **4. Alternative services to those currently provided by the Toy Bus:**

The Liberal Democrat Group's budget amendment in February opposed the decision to end the Toy Bus in 2014/15 and we are now opposed to the current plans to cease the provision within this financial year. We are not convinced that the alternative suggested in this report is adequate.

The report is short on a number of details and leaves various unanswered questions. No overall usage figures are provided, there is no indication of satisfaction levels or feedback from users of the Toy Bus, no detail on any revenue or potential revenue, no detail on the extra cost for the Mobile Library service, and no detail on the need to replace the Toy Bus "in the foreseeable future".

It is telling that the decision to cut the Toy Bus was taken before the public consultation process and users were not given the opportunity to say whether the Toy Bus should continue to be supported. Instead, they were presented with a *fait accompli* and only asked what should replace the Toy Bus.

There is no detail provided as to how the Mobile Library will incorporate a toy-lending service e.g. no layout plans or suggested delivery routes. There is also no commitment in this report that a toy-lending service will continue in the long-term or whether it will continue to serve the current route coverage, which crucially includes outlying villages as well as more populated areas.

The Cabinet Member will be aware that one of the advantages of the Toy Bus is that it provides a specialised and distinct space for children and parents to access toys. The trained staff on-hand are able to provide guidance to children, but also to provide advice to parents. The importance of helping parents to acquire the skills to play with their children and teach their children through play should not be underestimated. It is unclear if the new proposed arrangements would allow for this kind of interaction.

Unless the Cabinet Member addresses the concerns outlined above, it is the intention of the Liberal Democrat Group to formally call-in this decision for further review.